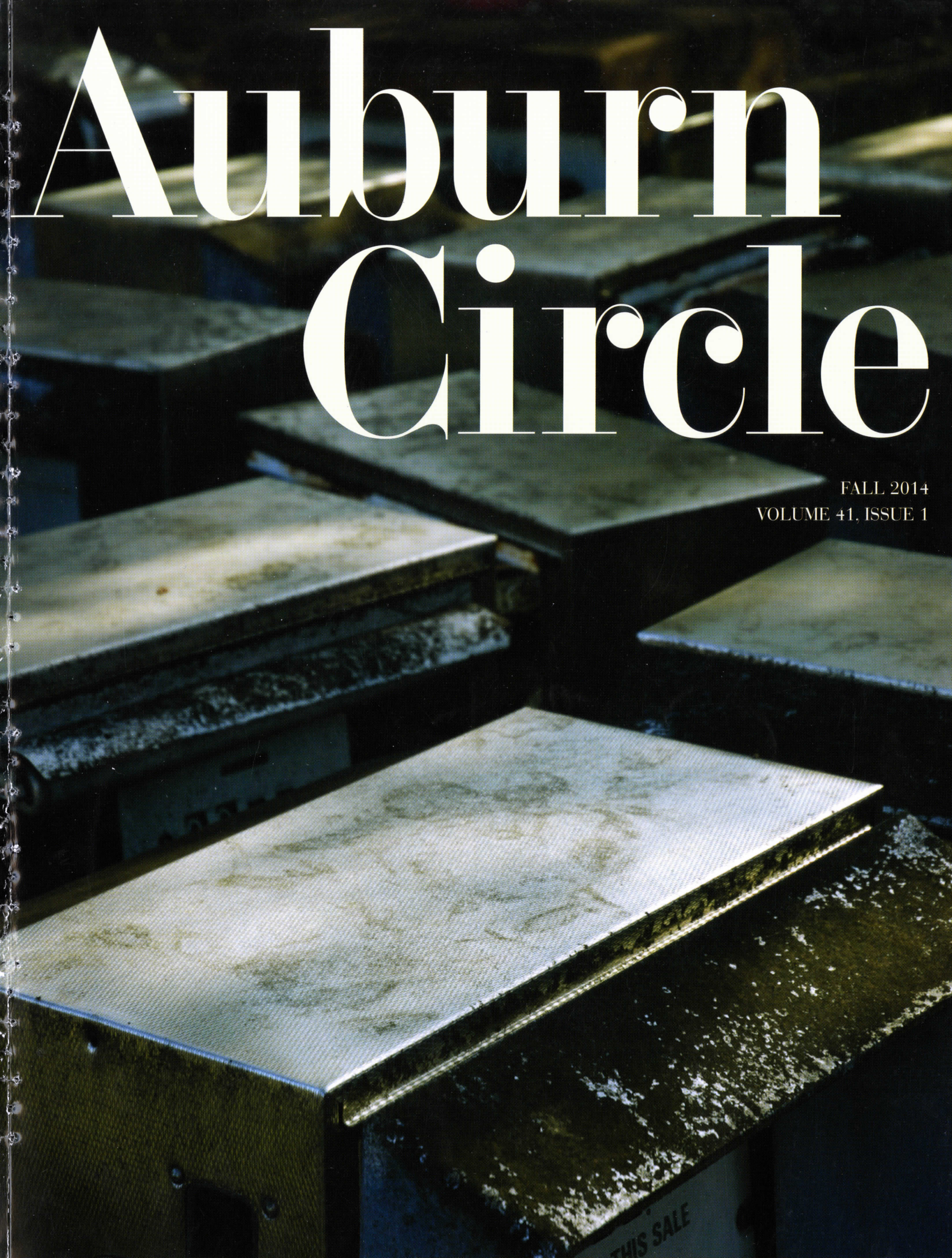


Auburn Circle



FALL 2014
VOLUME 41, ISSUE 1

THIS SALE

How to Submit Your Work

At the beginning of each semester, *The Auburn Circle* takes submissions for that semester's publication. Submissions include art, interior design, graphic design, poetry, photography, fiction, nonfiction, fashion, architecture, and any other documentable form of literature or art.

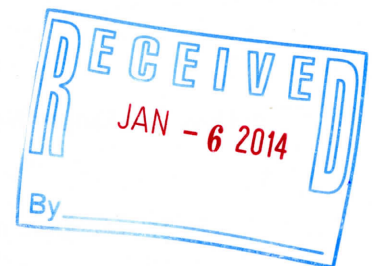
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“The person who aims after art in his
work aims after truth.”

Flannery O'Connor



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Featured Contributors

Caroline Barr, a senior in Creative Writing, lists Kappa Kappa Gamma, SOS, *The Glomerata*, *AUJUS*, and the English Club among her many campus involvements. She also writes for *Society South Magazine*, and hopes to work in publishing. One time she kissed Aubie and he fainted. About her pieces "7:00 p.m. on Ruby Beach" (p. 34) and "The Lost Love of the Honey Bee" (p. 68), she writes, "I like to explore how humans can grow through nature, what we can learn about the world and ourselves."

Chris Sanchez is a senior in Creative Writing. He works as a Peer Career Advisor at the Auburn Career Center. Chris grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, and Cormac McCarthy, J.R.R. Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis are among his favorite writers. His poem "Concrete Limits" (p. 57), written for a poetry class focused on the theme of "southern witness," was influenced by, in his words, "the intersection between the city and the country."

Zachary Welman is a senior double major in English and Philosophy. He works as a tutor at the Miller Writing Center and at the Athletics Center, and he is president of both the English Club and the Philosophy Club. In his spare time, he likes to write creatively, read, watch films, and travel. His story "A Letter Home from a Lover Abroad" (p. 62) was inspired by a piece he wrote during his time studying abroad in London in the summer of 2013.

Shannon Bewley is a sophomore pursuing a BFA in Studio Art and a BA in Art History. She serves as Event Coordinator for Studio 5 and belongs to the Association of Visual Arts. If she had time for hobbies, she would be outdoors hiking and rock climbing. About her linocut print "It's Happening" (p. 40), she told us: "The print is about the moment of the extinction of innocence... You become a different person, while part of you is still the old person."

Ian Milby is a sophomore in Pre-Graphic Design. He attends as many art festivals as he can, and his interests include drawing, instant photography, hiking, camping, and stealing magnets off of people's refrigerators. Ian told us "Photograph Against Violence" (p. 42) required a good deal of planning. The shocking photo is "meant to spark a negative feeling.... Violence happens in real life. It's one of those 'stop denying it and do something about it' kind of things."

Angela Carver, a freshman in Ecological Biosystems Engineering, is a student manager for Auburn's Equestrian Team and a mentee in the Ag Alumni Mentorship program. She is an amateur botanist and is currently learning Hebrew. She took the photos "Birth of Ferns" (p. 22) and "Succulent" (p. 66) at Callaway Gardens in Georgia. Her story "The Great Experiment" (p. 16) is "heavily inspired by God's Creation and the countryside." She writes, "I work in metaphors, and I like to think that most of what I write has more than one truth in it."

Letter from the Editor

Imagine eighteen weary students huddled around a conference table, wading through a pile of smudgily printed poems and grainy 4" x 6" prints from CVS, trying to match words with images. Somebody is asking for the cute poem with the baby bird. They can't find it because it's not cute, and it's not a baby bird. Someone else is suggesting we pair a photo of a dog—resting, eyes closed—with the poem that concludes with the image of a dead deer on the side of the road. We decide that's not a great idea, and sadly, there's not enough room for the dog anyway. In the end, everything gets matched up neatly as certain themes inevitably emerge. This semester, those themes are overwhelmingly Southern.

By far, the largest stack of photographs was the one of nature pics—smart artists with good cameras can capture Appalachia at its least corrupted. Likewise, Angela Carver's story "The Great Experiment" shows us a purified Southern landscape through its child narrator's eyes. Seemingly diametrically opposed to Carver's piece is Emily Chapman's wickedly funny satire "The Ex-Witch's Handbook." Quit fussing—this isn't about religion, and it isn't, as the name suggests, instructional. In fact, we're willing to bet that both stories will appeal to the same audience; after all, if you're one of those outdoorsy Southerners who appreciates a good waterfall photo, spending an eternity in an office may just be the worst hell imaginable.

That said, the South seldom wears its Sunday best, as proven by this season's crop of student poetry. If you're into Southern Gothic, you'll definitely find it in Laura Raye May's "Sister." Laura Hanna's "Before She Was Gone," Chris Sanchez's "Concrete Limits," and our own Emma Hyche's "Appalachia" reveal the South's tendency to come across as abrasive, gravelly. And on a more serious level, Anthony Bunger's "Blinded by Structure" and Ian Milby's "Photo Against Violence" return our attention to the South's problematic history and its continuing legacy.

On behalf of the whole staff, I hope you enjoy the magazine in your hands. It is the product of over three months of hard work from our staff and, in many cases, much longer from our student contributors. We are so proud of the artistic talents of the Auburn family, and we can't wait for you to see their work for yourselves.

Michelle Bangson
Editor in Chief



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Interlude In Somnium

I wish I could go forth with you—
deep into the Etherworld,
into the fluid grip of sleep.
I wish I could ride alongside you
on the train, away from the white, blue beach
with sun and moon hovering pendant in the sky
and silver tracks that disappear into the surf,
leading to a world above the water's surface.

I wish I could follow you
into the great, dark city,
up to the clock tower's top
where time stands still
as the world passes by.
With you, I would wait
for the dawn that will never break,
gaze down at the dancing lights below,
give comfort when you refuse to cry.

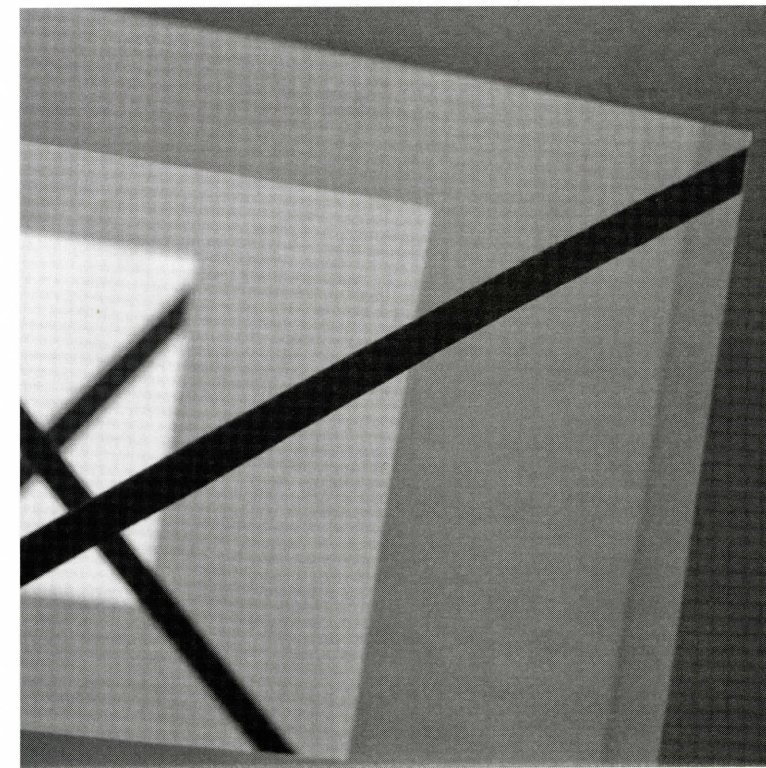
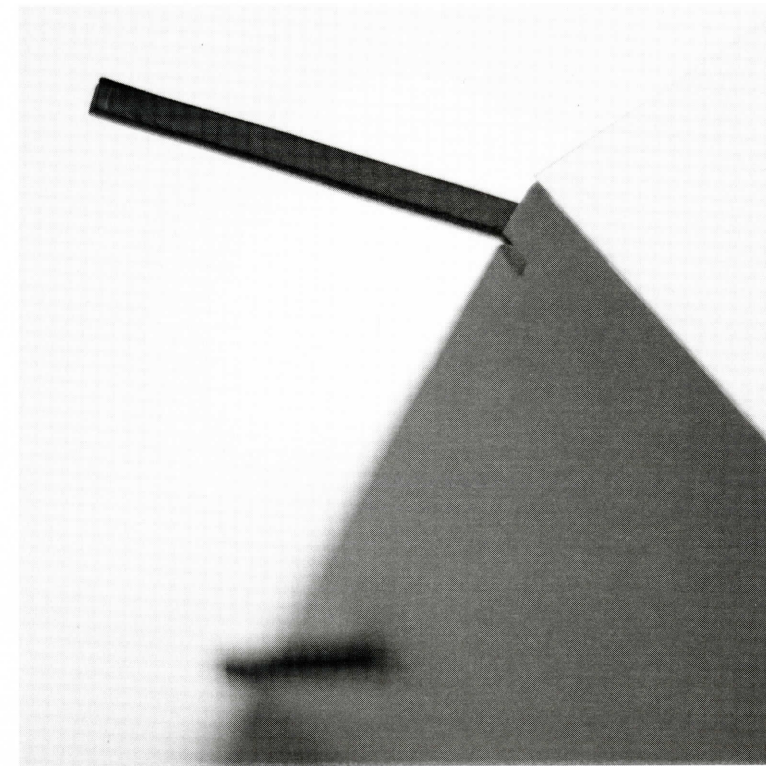
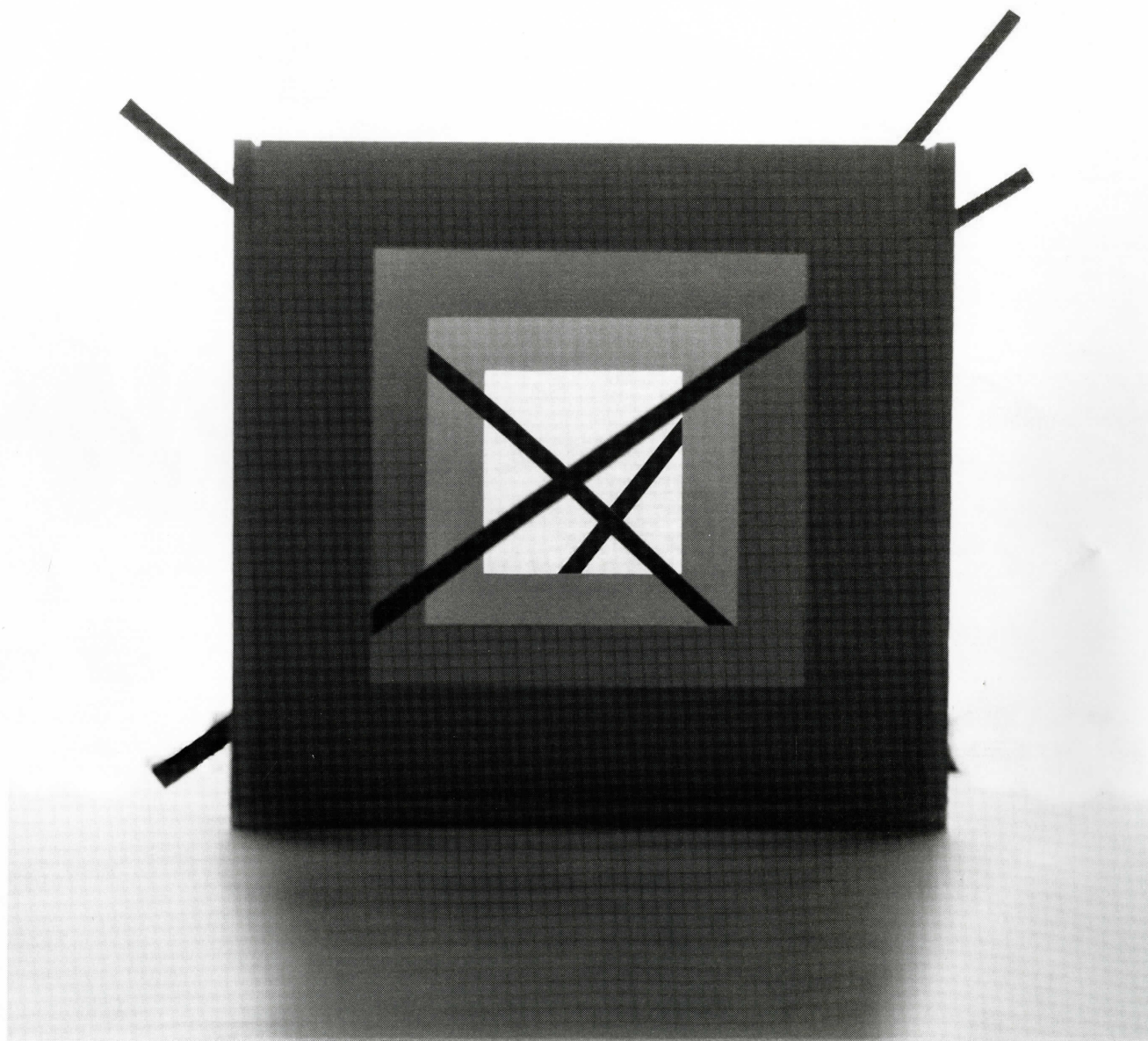
I wish I could travel with you
along the winding path
with nothing but a compass to guide us
onward, over the grass-green hills
where stars tell their stories and wanderers
keep company, if only for a little while.
And if we made it to the river,
that surging force that tears the past
from the clutch of so many cold fingers,
I would keep your memory,
and your memory I would be.

I wish I could lead you
out of the black, tangled woods,
where darkness knows no bounds
and fears become thick shadows,
where we would stand, brothers in arms,
against the terrors of the night.
I wish I could aid you
in the maze of many mirrors,
their smooth surfaces reflecting
the depths of the heart within.

But you must come to me,
search out this white-walled palace
hidden away in the land
where all lost love is found.
And when you do, we will meet again,
face to face,
not a world between us, but the truth.
For you will know what I wish, what I hope for—
that you never forget
who you are or where you've been.

And in the coming days,
on the journey ahead,
I hope you give up your burdens
and let your sorrows rest where they will,
so when you come to the end
—soul weary but whole—
to meet me one last time,
you can say you kept your promise—
that you found your faith,
and you never lost hope
in the dawn of a new day.





"Laser Progression Through
a Lightbox" by Ian Milby
Studio Art

Sister

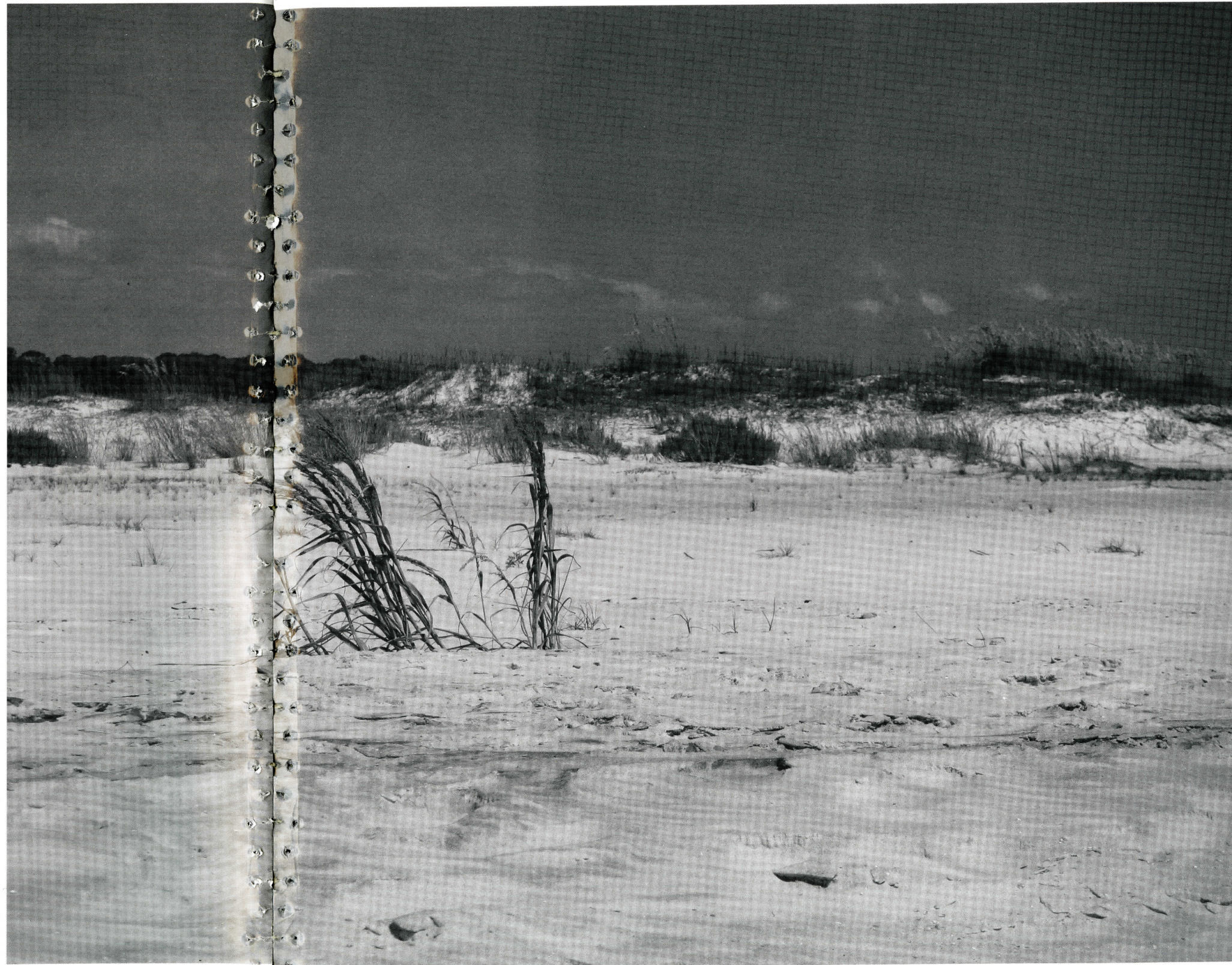
We won a goldfish at the county fair,
miserable little thing; it was dead
before we made it home, belly-up
in irreverent, bloated plastic,
taken, I thought, by my hands.
My sister wept for days.

We begged for new fish, threw
tantrums—my sister in shambles
with need. We were children.
Mother insisted we'd outgrow
it quickly; thou shall not waste.
My sister wept for weeks.

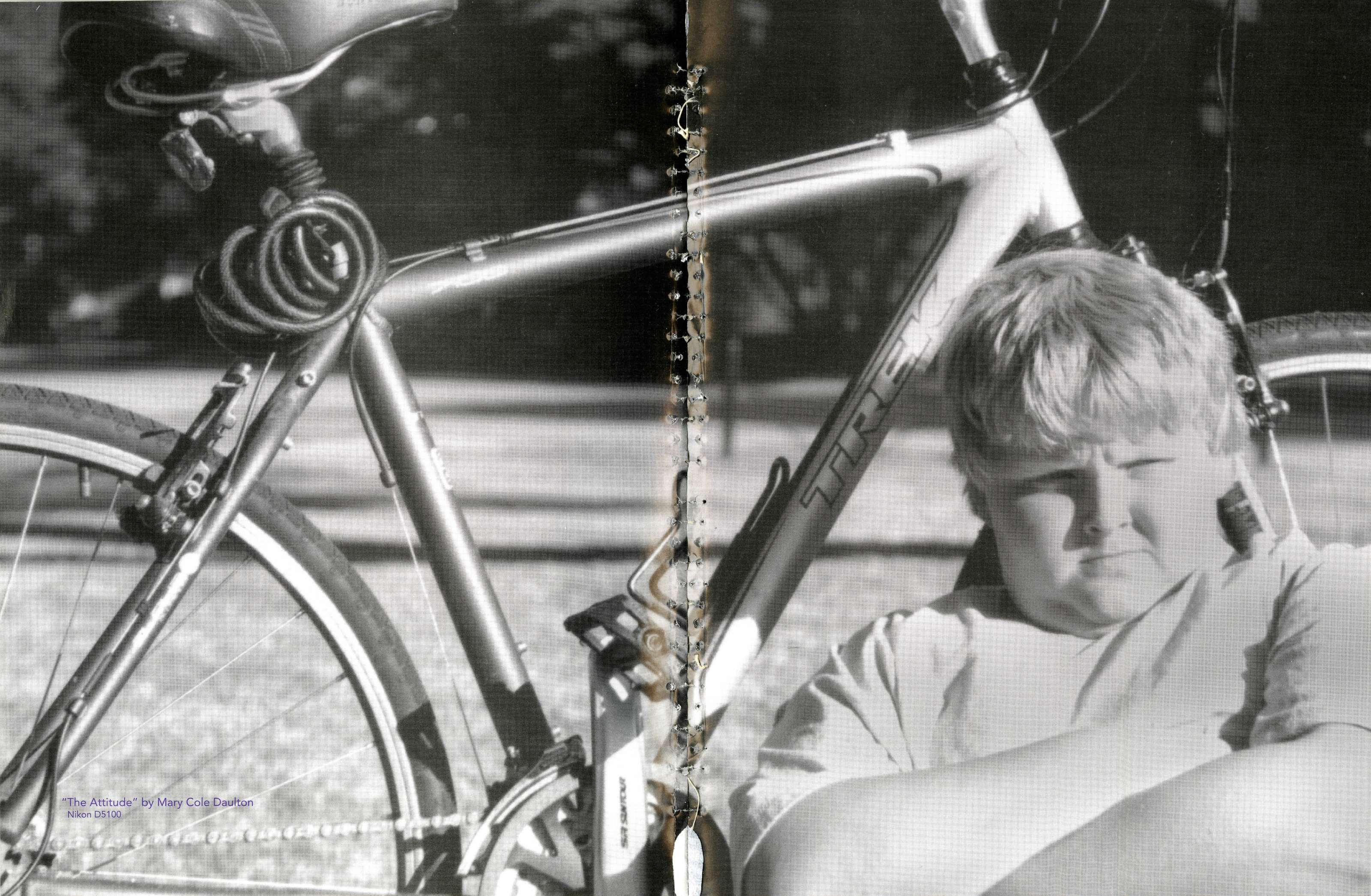
I stretched out, lost my love
for fins, but sister stayed small,
quiet in my adolescent shadow.
No one noticed her fingers
webbing. No one saw her gills.
My sister wept in secret.

We found her metamorphosis
too late: her skin in scales,
blue lips yawning, the fish
she always wanted: my sister,
cold and silver, flopping
on the bathroom floor.

Poetry by Laura Raye May



"Windy Beach" by Lydia Sweeney
Canon PowerShot



"The Attitude" by Mary Cole Daulton
Nikon D5100

A black and white photograph of a wooden deck. A single, large, fallen leaf lies on the wooden planks in the lower half of the frame. The leaf is crumpled and shows signs of decay. The wooden planks run diagonally across the image. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more of the deck and some distant foliage. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

The Great Experiment

Fiction by Angela Carver

Back in Maine one frosty, moose-filled winter, a nosy neighbor made some phone calls about what she called the "complete lack of parental supervision" in my household. The calls didn't get her anywhere, but my daddy said living anywhere would be better than there. So we left cold Maine and settled into a better place quicker than you can boil a pot of water.

The new town had been known as Happiness by every person who lived there since 1789, the year it gained its fifth citizen. Daddy said it was an improvement over Maine because any modern government that had ever known of its existence had long forgotten to care, and little brother Joey told me it was an improvement over Maine because he liked to dream of climbing the mountains that hovered just beyond the forest and drink water from the cold streams fed by waterfalls from the Little Dipper. One evening, while little brother Joey and I sat in a cedar tree watching the sun set with a final exhalation of brightness between Miss Annie and Miss Julie Lee—the two mountains closest to Happiness—I told little brother Joey I agreed this was a better place.

Little brother Joey and I adventured a golden first summer there; we wore our overalls until the knees were bleached white from wear, wrestled muddy catfish with our bare hands, and wiggled through patches of grasping blackberries. In the mornings, the shadows of Miss Annie and Miss Julie Lee chilled the air; in the evenings, golden light thickened the atmosphere like drowsy drops of wild honey.

The two of us—little brother Joey and I—had just sat down on the front stoop to the year's first batch of Mamma's apple cobbler when the methodical churning of the locusts was suddenly punctuated by heated words. It was Daddy's voice a mile away, the sound cutting through Mr. Buford's cow pasture from the road where Daddy was accustomed to walking home from town. Little brother Joey and I began to make out his words as he drew closer.

"School before summer's end," he said, "is obscene! How will my Sam and her little brother Joey help me pick pumpkins from the garden? Or harvest corn from the field? The sun has just begun to make the apples blush; the pawpaws have yet to give up their best fruit. I thought you

were American, but perhaps I shall make a visit into town tomorrow and we shall discuss it when I am in a calmer state."

We saw Daddy come out from behind a stand of tangled wild raspberry plants, phone still in his hand, focusing intently on the ground beneath his boots. Little brother Joey and I lingered on the porch after the last crumbs of the cobbler disappeared into our stomachs. We pretended to play hop, step, and jump in the grass while Daddy walked to the house.

He swung the screen door open with more-than-characteristic vigor and let it slam behind him with a hollow wooden crash, rattling the screen. Little Joey and I rushed quickly to the door and pressed our cheeks against its peeling teal paint and listened, just out of sight. I heard the scrape of a kitchen chair across the plank floor and a sigh as Daddy sat down.

"Well, James?" said Momma.

"I just got done walking and talking with the schoolteacher." He paused, and the sounds of Momma kneading bread echoed out onto the porch: the slap of dough against the counter, the light sifting of flour. "He says school starts next Wednesday."

"Well, it is September, James."

"I don't understand it. There couldn't be more than two hundred kids in the entire county," Daddy said.

"Then school will help Sammy and Joey get to know the others," Momma said.

"There are less oppressive ways to make friends—"

Here Brother Joey interrupted and asked me in a raspy whisper, "Sammy, what's oppressive mean?" I told him to hush.

"I will not hush," Joey said. I told him he'd either have to hush or they'd both know we were listening at the door.

"Well, I don't care if they do. I don't want to hush," he said. I told him to go sulk in the forest so I could listen to what they were saying.

"I will not hush," Joey said, "Unless, of course, you can beat me and Buttercup in a race."

"Joey," I said, growing annoyed, "by then it won't matter. Besides, my frog's faster than yours

any day. They'll be done talking, and we'll never know what they said."

"He is not faster than Buttercup, and you know it! Besides, we could always just ask Momma instead of dripping eaves," Joey scoffed. While I sat with my back to the door wondering how I could explain to Joey why we couldn't do that and why that would take the adventure out of it, Daddy's footsteps started advancing across the floor towards us.

I jumped away from the door and landed in a cool patch of thick-leafed grass, knocking Joey onto his back on the way.

"Ow!" Joey shouted, "What was that for?"

"Well, maybe if you would just hush your mouth for once, we wouldn't have this problem!"

Joey stood up, brushed himself off, and faced Daddy as he opened the screen door and peered out, smiling white and chuckling deep at us.

"Rachel," he called back to Momma, "this is why they don't need to go to school." Momma came up behind him, smiling and wiping her hands on her apron.

"Hand me those apple cobbler plates, y'all." She laughed and took the plates as we handed them to her from off the porch floor. "And get outta here. Go play, you crazy kids. I don't want to see you back here 'til dinner."

So Joey and I lit off for the woods. We ran across the hayfield, sweet with green grass, each stalk beating against our legs and each seed head tickling our knees. Then we burst into the evening cool of the woods, startling a mockingbird from its perch in a honeysuckle bush. It flew away in a quick flash of grey and white.

Joey slid to a stop in a spray of cedar needles and turned to face me.

"Let's go down to the lake, Sammy," little brother suggested.

"Well, I kinda wanted to go to the fox den and see if we can play with the little baby foxes."

"That's no fun! Last time we went down there, one of the little foxies bit my thumb." Joey peered at his thumb briefly. "It's too shady here to see the mark on my thumb, but it had little bitty fang marks all up and down. I think we should go to the lake and catch some bullfrogs—they don't have fangs."



"Cabin Roof" by Kate McCollum
Canon 5D Mark 3

"Foxes do not have fangs, only cougars have fangs. You should really get outside more."

"I've been outside with you all summer, and you're scared of bullfrogs because you're a girl and think they're slimy and gross."

"No, I don't—you take that back! I was catching bullfrogs before you were even born!"

"Well you could say whatever you want about that, because I wasn't there to witness it, so no one would actually be expected to know whether you caught bullfrogs without a witness or not. Which is definitely not." That comment from little Joey stopped the argument cold for a moment while I considered the best comeback.

"But Joey," I said after a pause, "I don't think that even makes sense."

Joey scowled, "Sure it does. I saw it on Perry Mason."

In another moment of silence, a third voice jumped into the conversation: "No, it really don't make any sense."

Joey and I both whirled to find the source of the voice and, seeing no one, Joey picked up a long sycamore branch and waved it menacingly in the air. "Whoever you are," Joey said, "you better come out of hiding, or you'll be forever a coward."

"Well, I'm not hiding. I'm just sittin' up here in my tree hunting squirrels, and y'all came busting in here arguing, and I think all the squirrels have left now anyhow."

Joey and I craned our necks to find him in all the nearby treetops. "Well, you better come down just the same. You don't want to get the reputation of a coward because, you know, once you get it, it doesn't go away."

"No, sir, I wouldn't want to be a coward. Half a minute." And then, with a very large rustle, a skinny boy with a face splashed with freckles slid out of an oak. "Howdy, my name's Benjamin," he said. After shifting a slingshot to his left hand, he stuck out his right.

Just as I was about to stick out my hand to shake his, Joey jumped in front of me and quickly took his hand.

"Hi, Benjamin. I'm Joey, and this is my sister Samantha. I call her Sammy, but most strangers just call her Samantha. Do you hunt here often? 'Cause we own this tree."

"Oh! Well, I sure am sorry about your tree, then. I didn't know this place had been bought up."

"We've lived here for three months," Joey said.

"Happiness doesn't gossip much," Benjamin says, "especially my Momma—she doesn't talk about anything but the weather, the flu, and rutabagas."

Joey paused and I managed to get a word in: "Which do you think we should do: go see the foxies or go catch bullfrogs?"

"I like bullfrogs better, myself," Benjamin said.

"Yeah, they're so cool!" Joey said, "Their croaks sound like drums or something, and then, when you have one in your hands and it keeps on croaking—"

"It vibrates all through your arm!" Benjamin interrupted.

"Yeah!" Joey threw away his stick to continue gesticulations of leaping after frogs in the full moon, catching crawdads and dismembering them, and when we started walking toward the lake, he told the story about when the big snapping turtle almost bit off his toe and about the big swirl of mud it raised when it lunged at him.

We had made our first friend in Happiness.

The next day, after an evening of smooth-skinned bullfrogs and a morning of Momma's steaming hotcakes, Daddy took us into town to join him at the Happiness town meeting, held every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. Daddy told me he only knew about it because he had tried to mail a letter to Grandma on Thursday at 10:30 a.m., and the postmaster was out, citing the town meeting as the cause of a complete cessation of all work in downtown.

Joey and I were less than thrilled to go, both because we foresaw a boring meeting with buzzing fluorescent lights and because we told Benjamin we'd be in the woods that day. But we went anyway and didn't regret it. When we walked into the Miss Julie Lee Diner on Cedar Street, there was a man with a white beard on the banjo, a blonde with an apron fiddling away in the corner, and red-checkered tables encircled by people clapping a beat and salting their baked potatoes.

The whole diner was centered under a heavy brass chandelier with candle bulbs that gave off a smoky, yellow glow. The air off the river streamed in through open windows, parting the lacy, white shades, and Joey grabbed me by the arm, pointing to a group of children our age playing cards on the floor, Benjamin among them. We walked over, and as we got closer, we could hear their young voices over the fiddle and the general rumble of laughter and conversation.

"Bologna sandwich!" cried a boy with short, reddish hair and a gap-filled smile, "You couldn't have put down three fives, because I have one and Julia put one down last go round!" The dark-

haired girl he was addressing scowled menacingly and drew the cards up into her hand.

Benjamin motioned to us, and I followed little brother Joey over.

"Hey guys," Benjamin said, "I'll introduce you to everybody." He turned to the red-haired boy and continued, "Hey John, these are the kids I was telling you about—the real good frog-catchers!" We were immediately surrounded by a throng of kids, the cards abandoned by all except the girl who was still stewing about her loss to the red-haired kid. Benjamin introduced them all as John the redhead, Sally and Billy, Jack and Joseph, Anna, Nick James Adams, Melissa, Lauren, Jesse



"Reality TV" by Katie Webster
Fujifilm QuickSnap Flash 400 Disposable 35mm



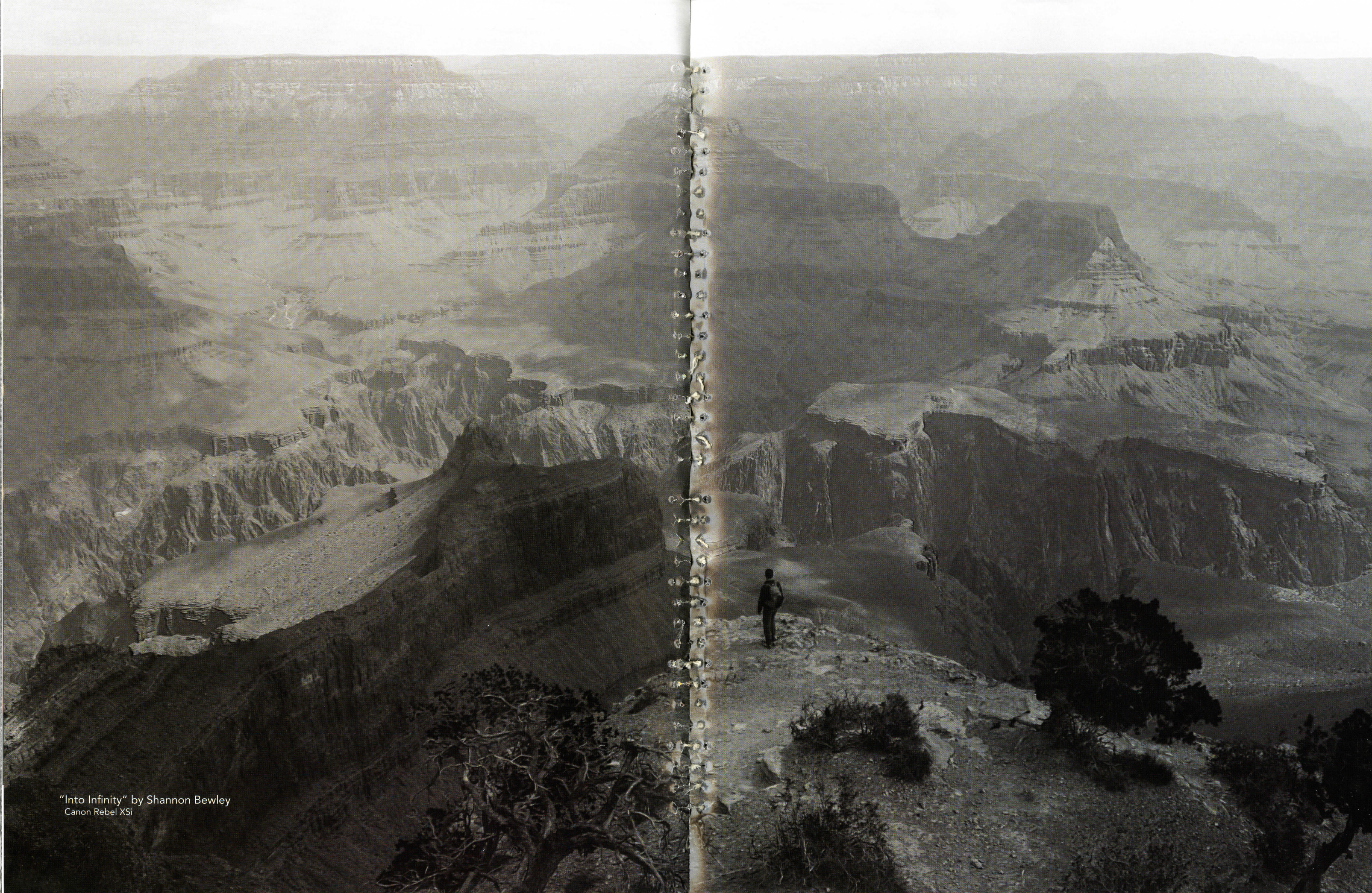
"Birth of Ferns" by Angela Carver
Canon Rebel T3i

and Callie, Rusty, Jake, and Phillip—but everybody called Phillip “Chevy” because he was born in his dad’s blue pickup. Then Benjamin told of how good I was at catching bullfrogs for a girl, how I wasn’t scared or nothing, and how little Joey almost got his toe bit off by a snapping turtle one time. Then we all sat down to cards and argued over whether the game was named after a Bologna Sandwich or the Boy Scouts.

In between hands, I saw Daddy talking to a man with silver-rimmed glasses and a neatly trimmed mustache, and two hands of Bologna Sandwich later, I saw him still talking to that man with a mustache, but a group of other adults had crowded around him, and much of the beat-clapping had stopped. I didn’t think much of it because people always wanted to listen to what Daddy wanted to say; he was really smart, and Momma called him articulate. But soon the pickin’ and fiddlin’ stopped, and I could hear Daddy’s voice over the voices of Benjamin and Sally and Melissa, so I watched the backs of the flannel shirts that separated me from Daddy as I listened to him speak.

“Keeping them in a schoolroom five days a week will suck the life out of them, kill their inherent curiosity. What they are provided in their nature ought not be ripped from them prematurely. The changes I suggest are an opportunity for them to explore and develop those innate qualities with which God has provided them. They will know what is in their backyard, have keen senses mentally, physically, and spiritually, and they will still know their multiplication tables. They will be a unique population upon the earth.”

The wind sung in through the curtains, a stout little old lady in a flower-print dress shouted “Amen,” and that was that. John, Sally, Billy, Jack, Joseph, Nick James Adams, Melissa, Lauren, Jesse, Callie, Rusty, Jake, Chevy, little brother Joey, and I would go to the schoolroom and the schoolmaster twice a week to be taught multiplication, and we would go to God’s country each week thrice, where we would be free. ●



"Into Infinity" by Shannon Bewley
Canon Rebel XSi



"The Chapel Market" by Kate McCollum
Canon 5D Mark 3

Opus 12

The trilling discord of crickets
is backed up by the low hum
of mosquitoes coming out

in the new heat. My grandmother's
small legs create the high-pitched
squeak of the swing easing back

and forth. Her voice presses down
on me like the dark, wet air,
my shoulders hunching over before

a sharp tap and a sit-up-straight-girl.
I continue to listen to her circular
rambling until thunder cascades

across the sky and heat lightning
sparks across the open fields. Once
we're inside, tucked away on the lumpy

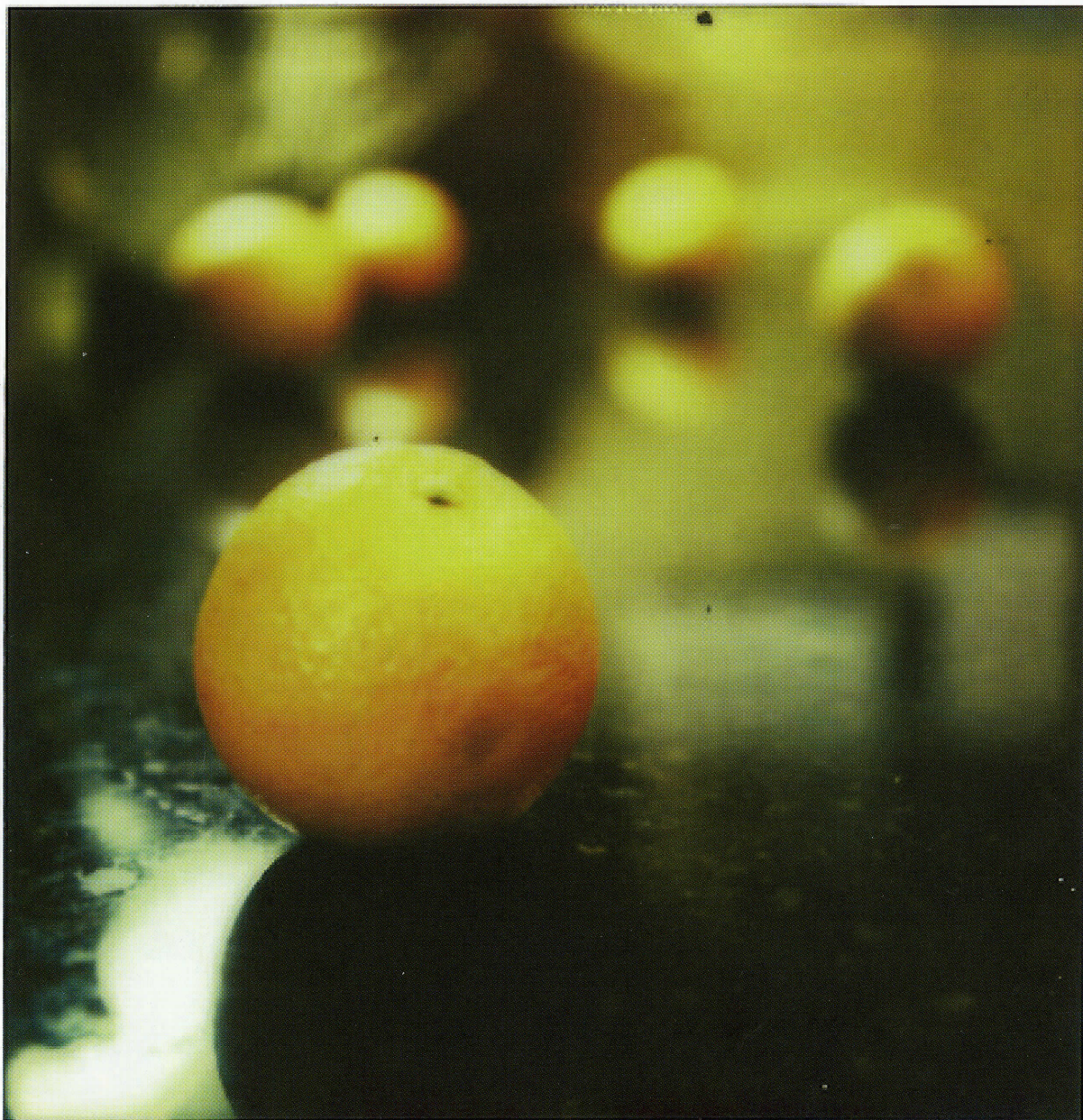
couch covered in handmade
afghans, she begins again.
I wish for it to stop.

Poetry by Laura Hanna

How The Empty Nest Came To Be

sticky palms reach
plump legs squat and leap
trying to grasp the branch
fingers clench
onto the leaves
that quickly snap
off causing the tree to shake
repeat repeat repeat
finally a twig
is caught between hands
that tug and tug
until the whole limb bends
towards the ground
the woven straw tumbles
from the crooked
intersection and speckled marbles
roll into the grass
those little fingers reach
out and pluck them
one by one
and push and push
letting each one crack
spiderwebbing out
thick goo rushes
in between fingers and down
to scraped elbows
later in the house
wide eyes peak through
the kitchen curtain
and watch the robin
hop along
the now empty branch

Poetry by Elizabeth Brittany Dennis



"Oranges" by Ian Milby
Polaroid



"Morning Risers" by Ian Milby
Nikon D2X

Appalachia

Blue jay perched on
a rain-slick bough.
Teenagers fucking in their
cars in the gravel
lot behind the flea market where
middle-aged women
sell homemade jewelry
and Confederate flags and
used videotapes.

The fog that pours like milk
over the ridge and down
into the valley, grayish
with pickup truck exhaust.
Chain-smoking Newports in
the backseat of my car at
the high school
on a Friday night and
dreaming.

The rumble of thunder, the
shiver that shakes the grass
like waves on beaches
hundreds of miles away.
Creeks choked with dirty foam
and rocks to split watermelon
and shins. I swam in one
as a girl and nearly drowned,
pulled reborn
from the greenish foam
by my father's hand
as pebbles and snail
shells filled my mouth.

Skies streaked with pink
and blue interrupted by
the sharp curve of
mountains, the earth's
arching spine. My grandfather

rolled cigarettes here in the valley
when he and my grandmother
were 16 and in love. My father
smoked joints under
the bleachers on Saturdays.
I was born with this history
in my blood like footprints,
but I am looking
towards Olympus's peak,
pine-coated on the horizon.

Raccoons scuttle in the
underbrush and I'm getting
high under the bridge by
the river, the one
where I was pulled out by
my father's hand as a child
like Aphrodite on the shore,
blue-lipped, shell-speckled

and fully formed. I
hike down here when the river
is rising and the
cars are thundering
over me down I-75.
It is the river that birthed me,
gasping and muddy
from the weeds.
The river will carry me to the
top of the mountain
someday, when
the muddy banks fall away.
Even littered with crushed
Coke cans and tires,
someday it will carry
me to join the gods.

Poetry by Emma Hyche

7:00 p.m. on Ruby Beach, Olympic National Park, WA

Hidden
 from malicious seaweed
 the road,
 and you,
 I kiss the splinters of carved promises
 left by sharp tongues
 searching for more than a *was here*
 in ash—
 lapping at a silver fog that tastes like you—
 your salty whispers
 that now tumble pink and uncertain
 from where I kept them close
 on the roof of my mouth,
 glinting back at me from the sand,
 at once
 reflecting and absorbing us
 and water
 and wood
 and of the supple stones
 I stack,
 some six high,
 all in the hopes
 of my fingertips' remembrance—
 your spine like smooth carvings made for me—
 and a wish
 that you would find me
 unhidden
 between these great rocks
 singing with the froth of high tide,
 fog-tousled
 and with rubies in my hands.

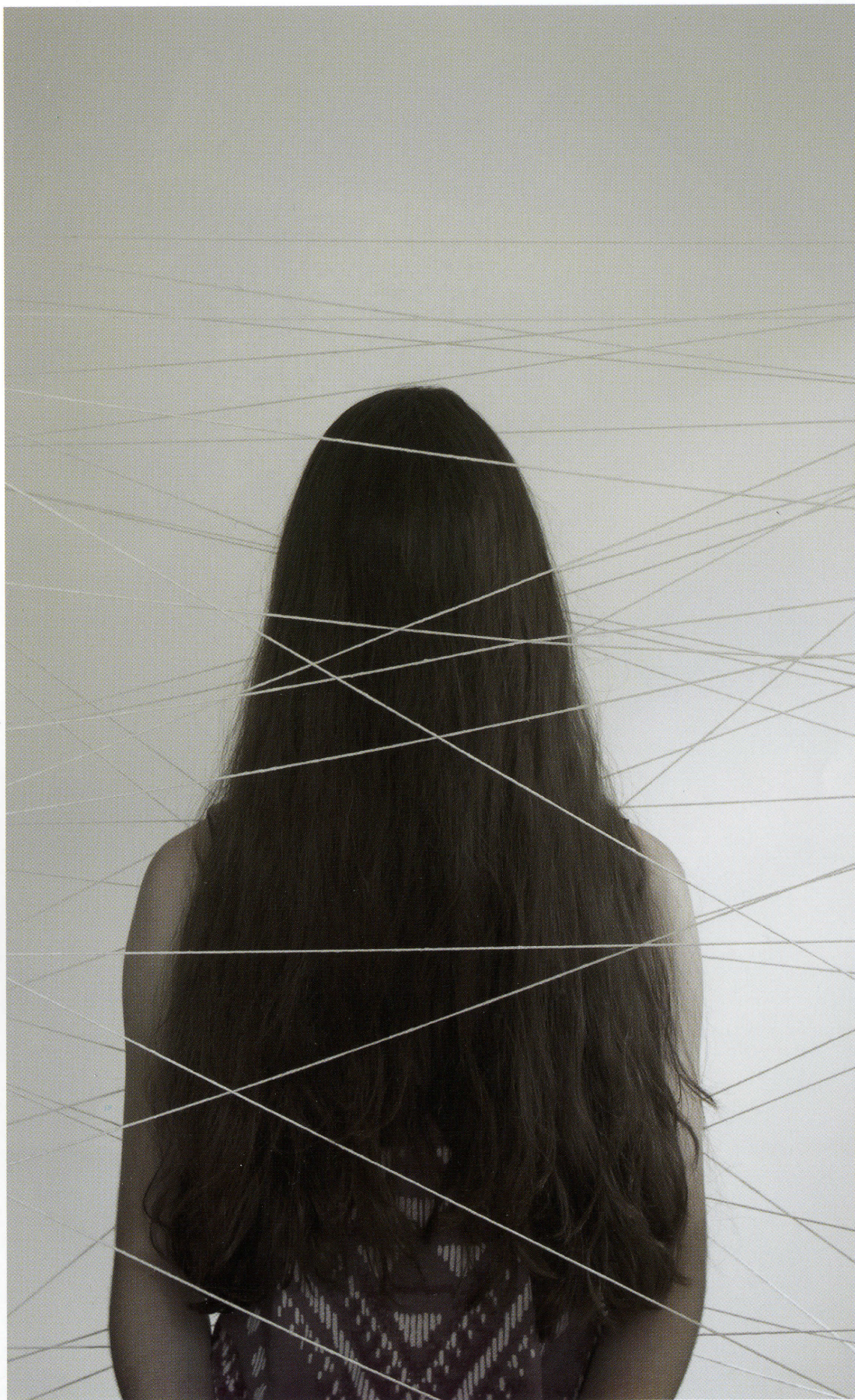
Poetry by Caroline Barr



"Lake Atitlán" by Ian Milby
 Nikon D2X

"Wedding Rain" by Laura Raye May
Nikon D7000





"Ad Infinitum" by Shannon Bewley
Canon Rebel X5i



"Gwen" by Alison Warth
Nikon D5100



"It's Happening" by Shannon Bewley
Linocut Print

Homecoming

It is winter again, that curious
crevice in between my illness and my health,
and time again for my melancholy.
I know this by now.
I ought to. It's come for eight years now.
Sure enough, it will
emerge, sleepy, drunk on the giddiness of itself
as if wrecking me was still a novelty.
Very well then.
I welcome it all in;
I've manners, don't I?
Well, I know how to show madness a good time.
That's why it keeps coming—
it's found a home in me.

Poetry by Emily Chapman

Blinded by Structure

We like to put objects in boxes, fit it all in our squares;
it feels nice having something to subjugate.
We like to sift all the wheat and trap all the bears.

Amigos work well for less-than-average fares;
we scoop them from the melting pot and pour them on a hot plate.
We like to put objects in boxes, fit it all in our squares.

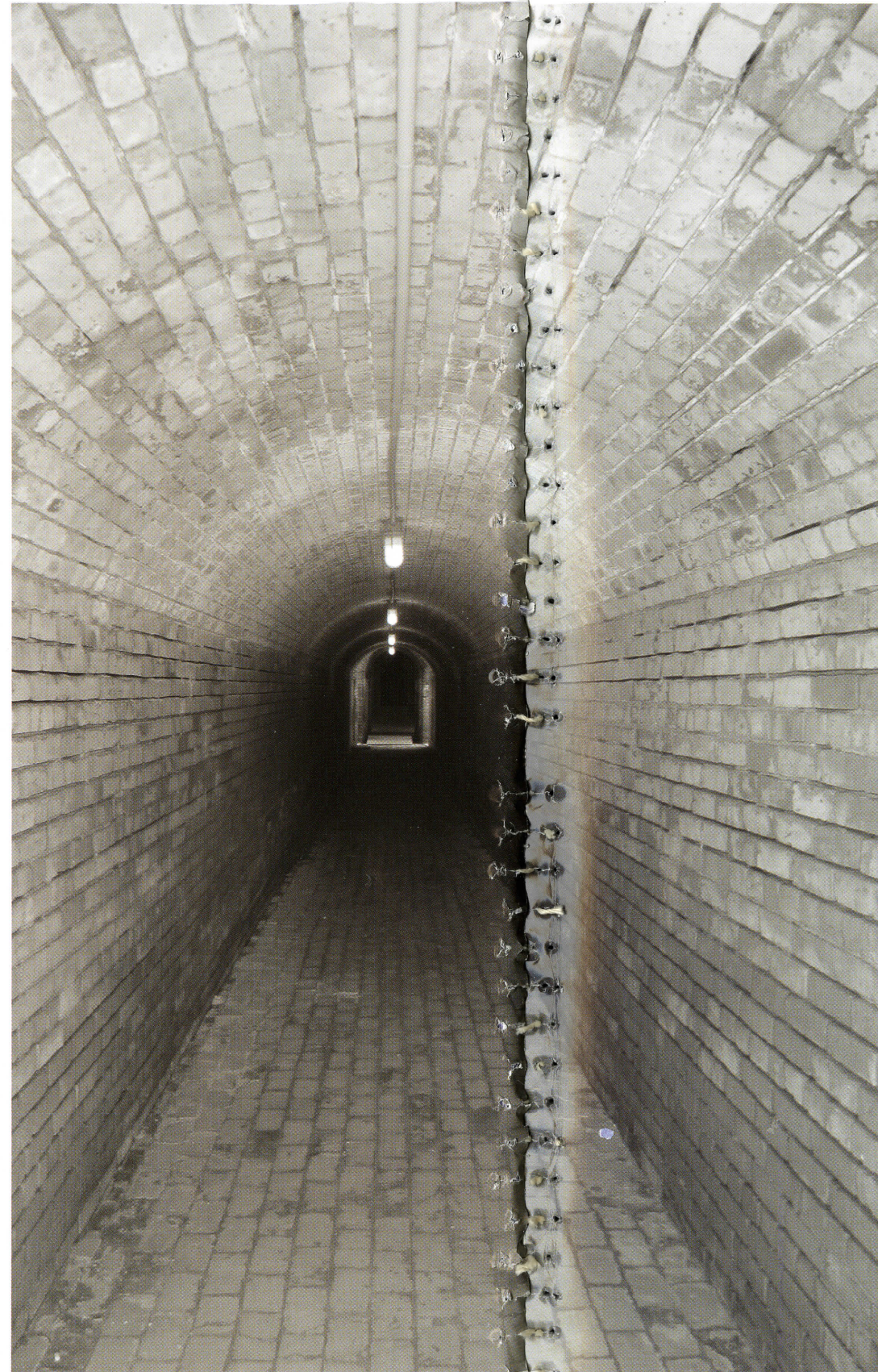
Hooded with a mocha complexion, we think that he glares;
we call police and make him comfortable behind an iron gate.
We like to sift all the wheat and trap all the bears.

He's on his knees five times to show Allah he cares;
we frisk him five times to make sure he doesn't detonate.
We like to put objects in boxes, fit it all in our squares.

We build up prisons with fences, barbed wire, and stairs;
brown men are penned up in grids that grow at an increasing rate.
We like to sift all the wheat and trap all the bears.

Injustice keeps count in graves, shameful squares
that shadow our past and present. Cemeteries wonder and wait.
Who covers up their boxes, shovels the soil into squares?
Who sifts dirt as wheat, traps them with excess weight to bear?

Poetry by Anthony Bunger



"Tunnel" by Lydia Sweeney
Canon Powershot



"Photograph Against Violence" by Ian Milby
Nikon D2X



"Hoofbeat" by Mary Cole Daulton
Nikon D5100

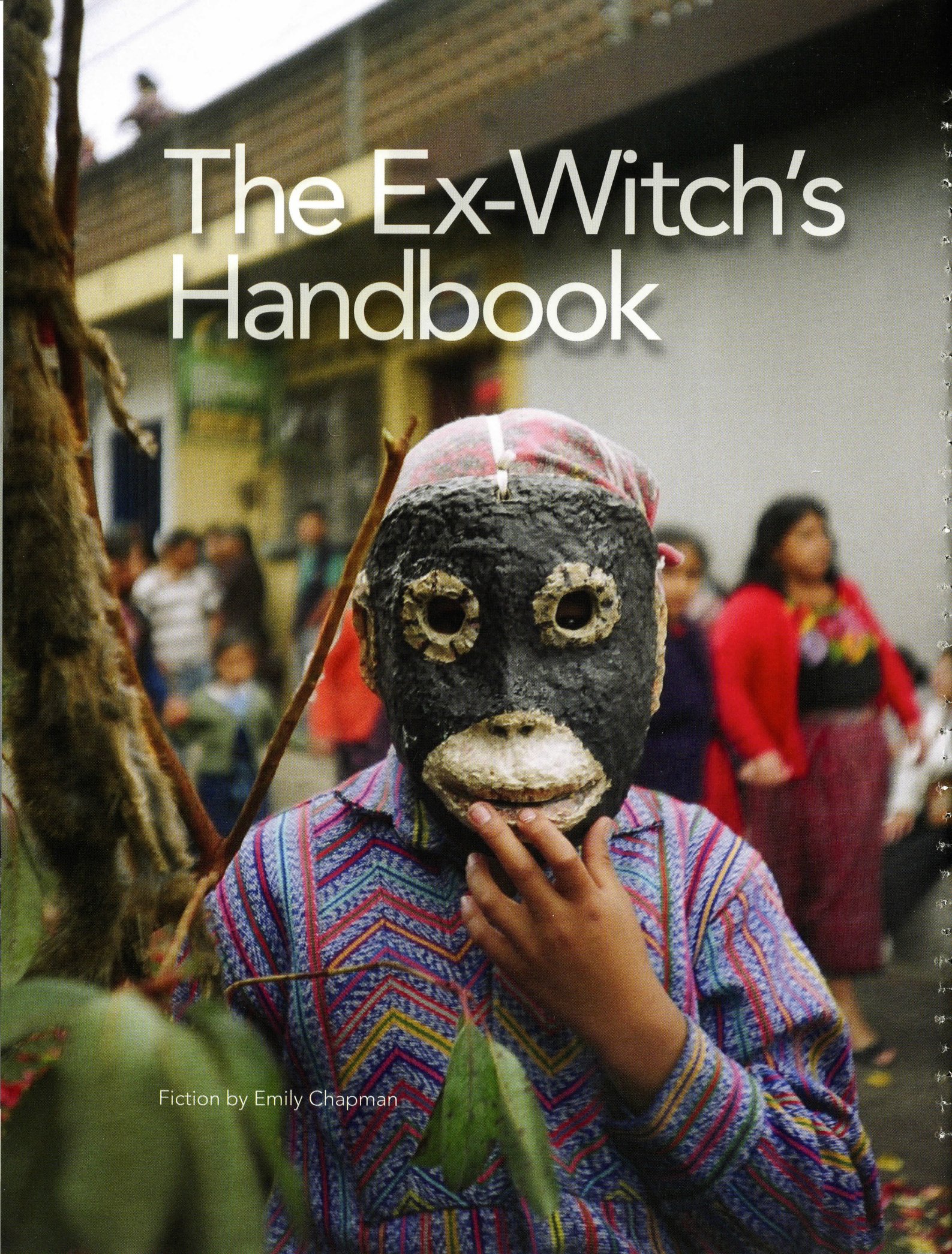
Ammo

I do not know how to compress my heart
into my words; the bullets fired may fail.
A weapon is the tongue, the gun an art.
I have not learned to bend it to my will.
The characters line up across the page
in tiny rows all beautiful and neat.
And, yet, inside, the warring voices rage.
There is no sound quite like that of retreat.
Fumbling, fearful Flintlock of my soul,
again, again, again you miss the mark.
The gun is jammed, delay will take its toll—
the trigger hand unsteady in the dark.
Dear trifling, rifling runes within the ranks,
please tell me when you'll all stop firing blanks.

Poetry by Rachel Lamberth

The Ex-Witch's Handbook

Fiction by Emily Chapman



Chapter One: Suck it, Shakespeare

So You're New (Burn, Baby, Burn)

The thing about black magic is that it's a sliding scale. One minute, you're using the Ouija board to summon the ghost of your friend's ex-lover; the next, you're digging up graves with a demon, searching for livers to grind up and put in potions, and your friend's ex-lover is waiting impatiently in the car. But you know that. That's why you're here, why you're reading this. Don't worry. We've all been there. Some of us even thought that we were doing good.

You should have known there were consequences. The road to hell.... Think of this like community service for the dearly departed. Everyone transgresses; every soul pays. You're just serving in a different place. Honestly, it's a lot better than anything else. Upstairs, you have to bring breezes to every snot-nosed brat, to guard over the unworthy, to visit alcoholics in the middle of the night and make them reevaluate, and on occasion, visit the desperately high and ask them if they've ever considered the afterlife. Believe me, you're much better off here. Less rules, you see, more mayhem. We enjoy an organized chaos. No brimstone here, no fire. We even have fans now—and air conditioning. Here, we run cold.

Make sure to pick up your complimentary jacket at the front desk, along with your welcome kit, containing:

- One (1) map
- Two (2) pomegranates (we're into irony)
- One (1) blue or red lighter
- One (1) temporary library card
- One (1) toothbrush and one (1) tube of toothpaste
- One (1) bar of sulfur-scented soap
- Three (3) pens: blue, black, and red
- One (1) composition book

The truth is that we operate this place more like an office than anything. It's a business, really, and our clients demand perfection. Don't disappoint them. We still have the old basement, after all. Every year, we lose a few thousand to it. Try not to be one of them.

Magic: Why You're Here

Of course, you know what magic is. If you don't, we don't know what to tell you. How you can commit treasons against nature and sanctity without knowledge of the fact, we're not sure. It's not as if you were visiting a graffitiist friend who, as the police drove by, handed you the cans and ran away and you had to do community service for the large, uninspired mural of poorly rendered genitalia. This shit is for real.

However, that being said, magic is not a tool of humanity. It's not a tool for those any less than omnipotent. Remember when you were a child, and your dad had that blue Bic lighter, the one he told your mom that he'd thrown away years ago? And how you, the prodigious child, decided to filch it from the sunglasses compartment of his car? Maybe, for you, when you clicked open his lighter, you only waved the flame around for a little bit. Maybe you didn't really know how to work it, but you kept trying because you had stolen it and, dammit, you were going to use it. Maybe you snatched his contraband cigarettes, too, the ones he promised your mom that he stopped smoking years ago. So maybe you held them, then inhaled, sputtering a bit. Or maybe you'd even done that before, calmly sitting in the garage like a deathly rebel.

Well, in a way, that's how humans use magic. Some of them, they play around thickly; others paw at it uselessly, but they've still grasped for it; and some, they open their mouths and, with skillful hands, yank out their skeletons and stuff something else within.

Magic chars everything it touches, especially you. Once you encounter it, even for a second, it will etch its indelible runes into your bones.

The Chain of Command

As a newly arrived soul, you must watch out for those above you. Among us are walking relics of the Old Times: the archaic, the sadistic, the downwardly celestial. In order to recall their positions, use the acronym DAMN, which ranks them from lowest to highest threat.

Demons. Demons, actually, look remarkably like people, barring one feature. They like to point

that out a lot during philosophical discussions. Most people reckon that it's the eyes that are different, the malice in them, the hate, but it's not. Humans carry an awful lot of hate within them. No, it's the nails—more claws than anything—always crusted with a dry, rusty brown. Demons possess the initiative, the inhibition that humans claim to lack.

Usually, they occupy desks and file paperwork when they're not off butchering nuns.

Ancients. Born with a thousand transmogrified faces, the Ancients claim that they were once something exquisite. It is said that they come from the great Before, when time had yet to be born.

They wander, for the most part; those who see them usually forget their faces, because they cannot process the horrors. Some, though, recall from their cell doors. Others take up their pens, and their nightmares drip down the page in ink.

They work in legal. If you need their assistance, do not knock on their doors. Call them from a payphone, send a messenger crow, or write in icing on a cake. They prefer chocolate.

Monsters (see page 456). As monsters come in all shapes, sizes, and species, we cannot fit each one into this compact section. Please read further on this subject and never, ever, ever misname them. Additionally, do not call them myths. That's just poor manners, and we do not tolerate violations of etiquette.

Monsters venture upwards to earth, though fewer now than before. They understand the lack of belief. Those forgotten are weaker than others, their names scraped from tongues. Some laze about and others endure a living death, their skin rotted from their bones, their eyeballs long fallen from the sockets, their bodies sentient ashes on the floor. A few clever old ones instead don new guises before their death sets in. They live a new life in supermarket check-out lines, gracing magazines. If you offer them a recollected curiosity, they will gladly pose as extraterrestrials and abduct an enemy of yours. If you throw in your childhood memories, they will even add in a DVD of the entire production. We have heard that it's worth it.

Nephilim. Look, if you take one thing away from this, do not anger the Nephilim. Do not even emanate disrespect in their general direction. Do not seek them out, but if you find yourself in their vicinity, you must interact with them, lest they think you disrepute them.

People ask us how to recognize a Nephil, but that's a question to which we don't really know the answer. All those who ever saw them are either long, long, long dead or newly so. They stopped leaving survivors thousands of years ago, when we kept either no records or poor ones. Some say that they're as tall as a tower, others say taller. Some say they have teeth made from knives and others, machine guns. Some reckon that they have a thousand heads with a thousand faces; but really, their appearances don't matter, because once you've seen them, they've seen you, and you'll soon see the inside of your chest.

Team Spirit

Welcome to the crew! Let us say that we have the highest regarded program. After all, we enjoy our jobs—who doesn't revel in an excellent ritual slaughter?

We do not intend to punish you, though don't let upstairs know. If someone heavenly calls you from a payphone, start shrieking about fire and damnation and eternal torment. Thanks, you're a peach.

Every Tuesday, we have a group improv exercise. Make sure to sign up on the snack sheet. You can find some amazing pastries here.

You'll work 9–5 every day (see the jobs section below) except Sundays and Mondays. We don't like Mondays here. In 1045, Beelzebub tried to make them illegal, but the day that replaced them was even worse, so we went back to Mondays.

Remember to obey your supervisors. They can—and will—send you to the basement.

Jobs

Your tasks will be chosen in correspondence to your sins. Please don't share your scores with anyone. Otherwise, competition will arise, and we only like that when you cause dissent.

Besides, some people do not face the same opportunities for malice. Remember those less fortunate.

Note that the wickedness of your deed is only one factor, as is the multiplicity of those deeds. We respect creativity, flair, the pizzazz. No one likes lazy evil. Your scores will take anywhere from ten minutes to 10,000 years to reach you. Make sure to head to the Waiting Room, take a number, and perch in a chair.

So You Think You Can Damn

If you display extraordinary skill in your tasks, you may face a promotion (not to be confused with a Promotion, which is an entirely sarcastic term and entails a smiting by the Nephilim). Few accept the promotion, and those that do are

known as freelancers. They often spend anywhere from four to ten years training. Not everyone is cut out for such a job—only 10% graduate. The rest, they're stuck halfway in between death and afterlife, trapped between Earth and here. So choose wisely!

After the successful finish their training, they are led into the Costumery, where they receive their skin. Sources say that the transition leads to a temporary state of madness, though in some cases the state is permanent. No cure exists. We prefer the insanity.

In those skins, the luckier freelancers travel upwards to Earth. Some work the crossroads. Others, governments. A few prefer to wander. Nonetheless, they all strive for a single goal:



"Victoria" by Alison Warth
Nikon D5100



"Connections" by Mary Cole Daulton
Nikon D5100

damning as many souls as possible. We call this recruitment. There's even a big board with scores at the Help Desk. Whoever sets the record gets a damn good prize. However, the job is more of an art than one thinks. Freelancers may offer the opportunity, but souls must make the choices for themselves.

Additionally, do not assume freelancers' involvement in all major catastrophes. Salem, for instance, was entirely the product of humanity. This place, Shakespeare should have known, is filled to the brim with devils, but that doesn't denote a lack on Earth.

There will be many forms to sign to apply for this. Know that we have an airtight legal department. *Read the fine print.* How many times do we have to reiterate this?

Housing

Fill out the survey given to you upon arrival. It contains the obvious ("What is your favorite way to bludgeon your enemies?" "What is the worst deed you wished you did?") to the thought-provoking ("How much, on a scale of one to ten, do you resent the happiness of others?" "What is your favorite shade of black?") to, frankly, the bizarre ("Has a spell of yours ever gone good?" "Who inspired you to channel darkness?"). Please answer honestly.

From that pool, your roommates (up to three) will be selected. Roommates may not be exchanged under any circumstance. After all, it is perfectly logical for a twenty-question survey to determine your eternity.

As our realm is infinite, we do not want for space, but it's always nice to broaden one's horizons.

Food and Drink

Here, taste is merely a luxury. You do not need sustenance, though some indulge. Some inhabitants haven't eaten since they arrived. We suggest following their example; recall Persephone. The more you devour, the harder it is to leave. This may be due, in part, to the fact that we possess all the best chefs.

Payment

Currency leads to corruption. We prefer corruption among our leaders, not among our populace, so we print no money and mint no coin. That isn't to say that we don't have a bartering system. It consists not of physical possessions, but mental ones. You may buy a coffee for your best friend's name, a television in exchange for the perception of your favorite color, a sweet skateboard for all of your memories involving puppies.

Entertainment and Media Services

The most talented often end up here, though perhaps not in the Witchcraft department. Nonetheless, as a whole, we possess an extensive, excellent library. We pride ourselves on

the chronological, alphabetical organization as well as the array of audio, video, and literary works. Why, some of your favorite artists didn't let death stop them! Here, you may find their posthumous works.

Make sure to always visit with a friend, though, because the library stretches as long as eternity, some say. We guess that they're right, because many people have set off to find the end, and none have returned.

Don't Do the Limbo

Now, you might be saying to yourself, why do I have to stay here and work? Wouldn't it be better going upwards to the ground floor? We're glad you asked, person of hypothetical construct.



"Toad" by Lydia Sweeney
Canon Powershot

Imagine a plane. There's a woman in 2A, chatting on her phone and an airline attendant begging her to stop. He's sneaking shots in the bathrooms, and always stumbles into your seat, spilling someone's orange juice on your hair. Behind you is a crying baby. In front of you is a crying baby. On either side of you sits a crying baby. A crying baby rests on your lap, its face terrifyingly similar to yours. An old grandma is knitting her son a scarf, and three flight attendants tackle her, because knitting needles are not TSA sanctioned. Out your window, the sky is stuck in the same phase, the dark just before the sun dares to rise, starless, no moon. It's like that forever. There's a screen in front of you with flight-approved music (that one song you could never stand), a movie (a compilation of your most embarrassing moments), and a trivia game that always asks questions you almost know the answer to. If you check the progress of your flight, the screen approximation plane is in the exact same place. Your expected arrival time is in three hours, five minutes, twenty seconds. Always, it is in three hours, five minutes, twenty seconds. You can never find a clock. The pilot makes crucial messages in a language you don't understand. It makes the babies cry harder. You may or may not be a crying baby.

That's limbo for you. If you want to chance it, you cannot ever come back.

Upstairs

It's not all harps and halos up there. And have you tried walking on a cloud? You always fall through, trust us. And oh, the narcissism, the smugness, the self-righteousness. You think you've seen intolerable bureaucrats? Believe us, they perfected the idea.

If limbo is a plane, then upstairs is a box. They stuff you inside, cutting tiny holes so you can breathe, so the sunlight seeps in, and they don't let you know if you're insane or ecstatic.

Besides, they post guards at every entrance, their wings dipped in blood and silver, their halos barbed, their robes composed of chainmail. They will flay the flesh from your skin and read your bones. Soon enough, you will find yourself begging for the basement.

I Wanna Get Physical (Physical)

By now, you must have noticed your conspicuous corporeality. Though you are, at your barest, a soul, souls cannot do the laundry or walk the hellhound or serve the powers that be. Therefore, you will find that your soul will fill a Shell (which is, of course, quite different from a Skin).

Shells will resemble you, of course, though not during your final state. We tried that in the beginning, but it led to a multitude of troubles—notably one case during which a man was crushed in an avalanche of rocks, and he had to navigate despite being a puddle of blood and tissues. In the end, it was decided that the dead would instead assume their favorite personal form, or their preferred appearance that they possessed. Unfortunately, that led to additional pandemonium, for some arrived here at tender ages, and they did not wish to wear the Shell of thirteen-year-olds for eternity. Thenceforth, souls assumed their preferred possible physical forms. In other words, if a soul lived to twenty but its favorite age would have been forty, then it would be forever forty.

Know that you have twenty-four hours to choose your form, or that choice will be made for you. The choice will be irrevocable, no matter who made it, so choose wisely.

Religion

Honestly, we don't give a fuck. As long as you do your job, it doesn't matter. Free will may be an illusion, but we strive to keep that illusion representative to all creeds and viewpoints.

Souls

Your soul is a privilege, not a right. We can—and will—remove it. And yes, your essence can survive without it, though it won't like it. It will claw and rip and tear against your caged rib bones. So, please, don't make trouble.

Misfiling

If you believe that your destination has been misfiled, please take a second number. Know that it will never be called. We do not make mistakes. Your eternity belongs to us now, darling. ●



Concrete Limits

The pickup departs, the city's evening haze
in the rearview, a million lights burning—
fireflies against a canopy of iron pines.

Rain creeps down the windshield in cautious
drips, casting tears of exhaust over taillights
bloodshot from the tireless day.

Faded neon—FOOD and GAS—
looms ahead as fumes of diesel
and frying oil tug at the wheel.

The long shadow of an overpass slides
across the hood, the headlights painting
over concrete graffiti half-devoured by moss.

Burnt tracks veer off broken asphalt
toward gloomy woods. A slouching,
rusted mile marker holds a silent vigil.

A shredded scrap of tire lies atop a worn,
muddy mattress on the roadside, drowsily
watching the nightly trumpeting procession.

Farther along rest the wasted remains
of a bloated buck, pungent steam
rising, streaming down the highway.

Poetry by Chris Sanchez

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in the rearview, a million lights burning—
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Poetry by Chris Sanchez



"Old Wounds" by Sara Pope
Canon EOS Rebel T3

An Agglomeration of Ages

My finite forever, fettered in moment-sized measuring cups.

Memories in mixing bowl,

Numbered days beneath rolling pin,

Baked into a fine sheet of glass.

Liquid cognizance, crystallized.

A familiar film, fractured.

Cinematic shards

Skiping like beloved aged records.

Fragmented could-bes and never-woulds

Simultaneously lay in existence.

We are together, we are apart,

In the gory bits of time and space

We are together apart.

Once more I will cradle your kisses,

Flickering fireflies

Twinkling in and out of existence,

In cupped hands

As they once did

In raspberry fields

On humid July nights

Where we lay

Beneath white flowing sheets

Over clotheslines.

I will let memories,

Sweet on my tongue, melt.

Childhood starry nights

Of candlelight beneath colander,

Celestial projections

Upon wooden slats of worn barns.

'Til fire flickers, fades.

When Heaven is strained

Through pinholes amidst pitch black

Paling to daybreak.

Cogs and wheels humming softly,

Echoing eternity.

Gentle hands carry me home,

Beyond broken pieces of glass,

Hanging outside of time:

Stars suspended in darkness,

Their light outliving their flame.

Revisiting the remnants of a cherished picture show,

Coming home to elbows deep in pie crust,

Baked apples wafting through the small kitchen door.

We are apart, we are together,

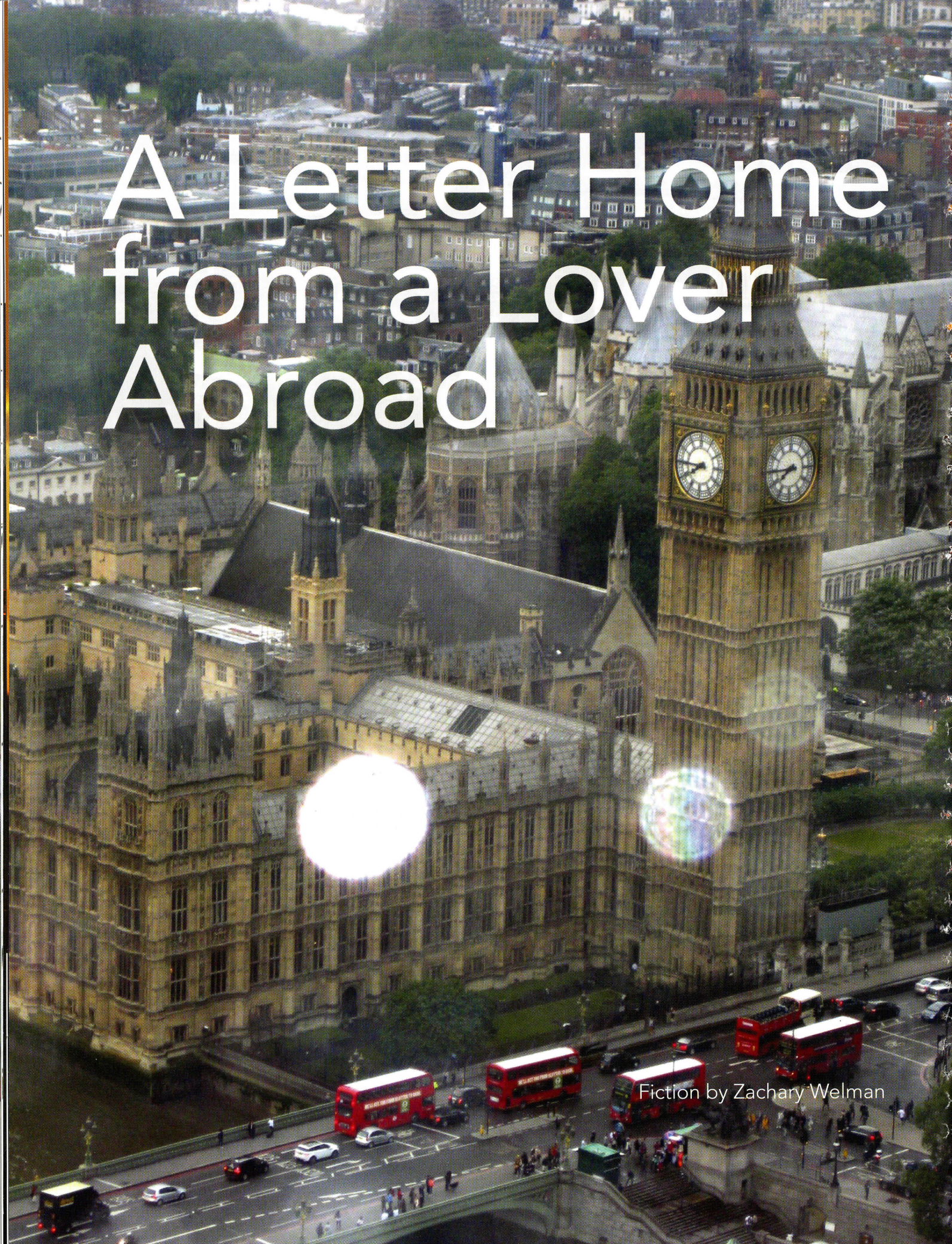
Outside the rhythmic restraint of time

We are apart together.

Poetry by Mariah King



"Manifest Destiny" by Mary Cole Daulton
Nikon D5100



A Letter Home from a Lover Abroad



Fiction by Zachary Welman

So I awoke out of a sleep, the sweat-steamed plastic dis-adhered from my face, and the doors swept open, and out I drifted. What a shame I had woken up; I had lived my entire life of pure bliss and fulfillment with you in that sleep. I was on the hunt for some stationery. Dear Katherine, it is not often I lose myself in a city, but due to the hum of the train, which I imagined was your voice serenading me to sleep by your side as we squished into your aqua blue double-sized hammock hanging from that perfect tree on that very un-London day in May back home, I managed to awake and just get off at that very stop—me, spontaneous! I jaunted up the steps and, to my astonishment, met eye-to-eye with the Admiral on his throne, above all, smack-dab in the center of London. My eyes were his eyes, my ears all the ears of the great crowd around me taking in the whole of London. All letter writing (apologies) was forgotten. (This place—it makes me want to affect a Victorian outlook on everything.)

The National Portrait Gallery: how I entered there, I am not sure, but it was a sublime place (you really should go). I tell you what, it may have been that long conversation of ours we had the night before and your prodding me about when exactly am I going to get around to writing you a letter because, hey, you're bored there at the lake and it would be nice... whatever the reason, on this day, my mind was in a million and one pieces scattered throughout the whole of London. In a certain sense, it was a blessing, as I became the sort of eavesdropper to rival you and your loose-tongued friends. The narrow halls and winding walls of the gallery were filled with people, all going to see this or that famous person, this or that artist, actor, royal. And yet I alone came for them, the masses—they were my Bill Shakespeare, my Will and Harry and Kate, my Kings and Queens, my explorers and poets, my lovers and warmakers.

I saw three whispering, interested, to each other: "She was... She had to fight like mad."
"...She was killing people, too—" "She had to—"

"Or else others would kill her, yeah..." "Right... and...our great Golden Age was then, really..."

I assumed, due to the portraits around me, of kings and queens and aristocrats through a period of a hundred or so years, that they must have been speaking about Elizabeth I. Who else? Did you know she was supposedly a "virgin queen?" I don't believe it. So many of the men who hung on the walls around her were friends or confidants of hers...what woman, even one so strong, so truly fit to rule (if her portrait is true to her essence as it seems to me), could resist the shackles of love, which bind any and all of us if we happen upon them (and be sure that we do happen upon them), making slaves out of knaves who in folly dare to cross a mighty pond to escape its clutches (Love comes for us all)? Who among us escapes or suffers love unscathed? Elizabeth must have had some tender feelings stirring in that manly stomach of hers, for what passionate lengthy rule could be sustained by uncaring, by indifference? What drives a human to kill or have others killed but love? Why not wed and save yourself from having to face rough seas and rough ships, if not for the love of another?

As I tread airily to another room, I see two gallery guards in black uniform at their changing. I catch the white one saying, "...ready now?" The black one taps his toes, chuckles without turning as the other places a hand on his shoulder, says, "...time already?" "My turn, John." "Time for a cup of tea..." says John as he gets up, patting the older guard on the arm, going to what I hope for him is tea (I wonder about such a job...). What is a friendship between two but a shared pot of tea around a corner table during your work break? That tearoom back in Bermuda—you know the one, in which, I intuited, we turned a sort of corner in our friendship—seems as distant as we are now to each other.

I turn from them to another couple: two young girls of maybe seven, with the cutest little posh accents. The one in pink (there must be one in pink), questions: "Where are the adults?"

The one in blue, hair whipping back, head already poking into the next room, reaches back a hand and says, "Somewhere there, but let's go here and...." Adventures and leaps of faith make the fastest of friends; one always needs a hand to grasp so as to not fall flat on their face in life, don't you agree? That little girl, the one in blue—I hope our little one is like her; I hope she is adventurous and daring. I hope I see her someday.

Though Paris gets the respect, London is certainly a city for love! The couples are forever matching here. And they are not shy about their displays of affection, their joy of finding themselves in the other, whose hand they tightly hold for fear it may not be there again when they look. PDA on the Tube, on the streets, in the park, in boats, in the Eye—I find it lovely, really. You may not.... I could change your mind. You only have to take a leap across the pond

to try. And it's really the youngest ones who do it, of course. The heat is there, the blood so close to the skin, the light in the tunnel appearing so far off, the bells in the chapel unheard, or at least distant, ignored. What is life in London without half of yourself? Am I truly in London when my mind is in America?

A quick stop in the café because my tummy needs filling (I remember yours being so, so full: you were beautiful then, as always). So much listening and admiring such interesting people makes one work up a mighty hunger of another kind. I get coffee and a croissant. A girl around our age and her mother and sister are just gathering their handbags and rubbish for the bin and moving along near me, and I have no phone here to check while I munch and sip.

"How old is he? How old are you?" "Ha... skin so smooth as a baby's bottom..." "...why'd you even say that?" "...as a baby's bottom..." "How old is he?" "...That's why I'm more mature than you..."

A family's love is something else entirely, like a silent snowfall in deep winter: the entire world, all meaning and significance are there in the snowflakes, individual as



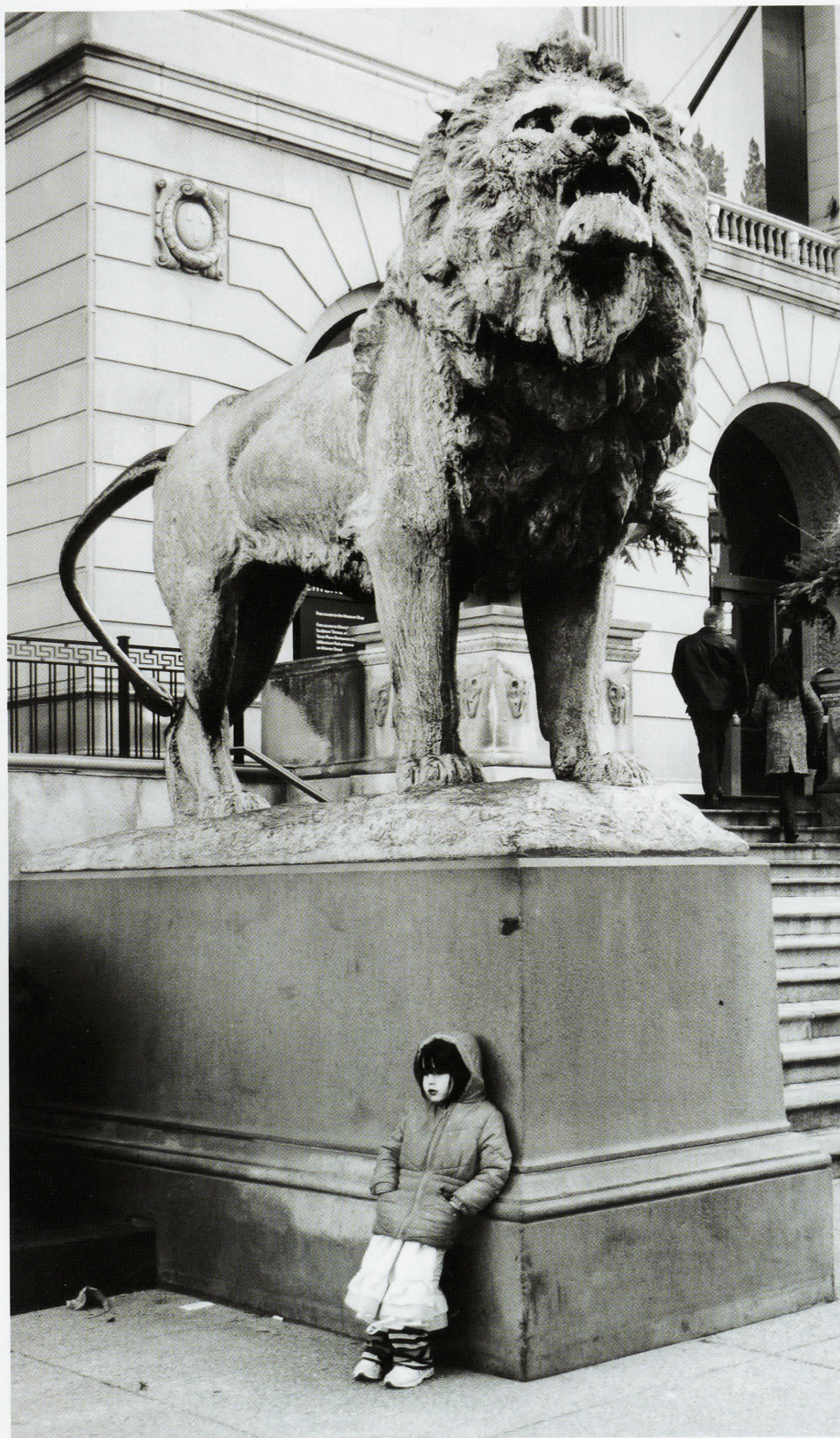
"Bedlam" by Noori Mallaji
iPhone 5

they fall, but amassing as they spatter the splayed old whiteness already all adrift in my yard, such that an entire dictionary couldn't carry the volume of speech necessary to adequately draw back out those individual flakes of meaning from that vast moment. All one can do is look on in wonder, knowing not how each snowflake, though so individually different from the others, bonds together with the group as one, in that one place and one time, forever.

The last words I remember overhearing as I left the portrait gallery and turned toward the square were yours on the phone from the night before: "I just feel so old...so heavy that my bones are creaking from all the pressure, all the possibilities. I don't know what to do. The two of us here don't have enough...Ha, she has your eyes...But I mean my parents...my parents...they...this is your fault and I hate that I don't hate you for it."

And I hated seeing my stupid, blank stare squared at me in the mirror while I was on the other end of the line; my hollow voice was like a drop off the longest cliff there ever was—in that moment, I wanted to take the next flight to you and her, Katherine. (But you know I cannot.)

And yes, I did wind down the Strand to pick up some fine, flowery, Bloomsbury-quality stationery on which to write my two letters of necessity. One is for you; the other is for your parents. I am mailing both to you. You either take the leap, mailing them theirs on your way out, or you keep it and throw my letter to you in the fire. Because the ensnaring vines of love have worked their way into both of your lives, my Katherine, I am afraid you will regret both choices. ●



"Majesty" by Rachel Sterchi
Nikon D3000



"Succulent" by Angela Carver
Canon Rebel T3i

The Lost Love of the Honeybee

Your effervescent fuzz
curves along a milky petal
as gingerly as fingers grasp
the hot porcelain handle
sutured to a steaming mug
of a nectar not so far removed
from the underside of your tongue
and black palms
shuffling with a ferventness
all too familiar
all too necessary
to consume the

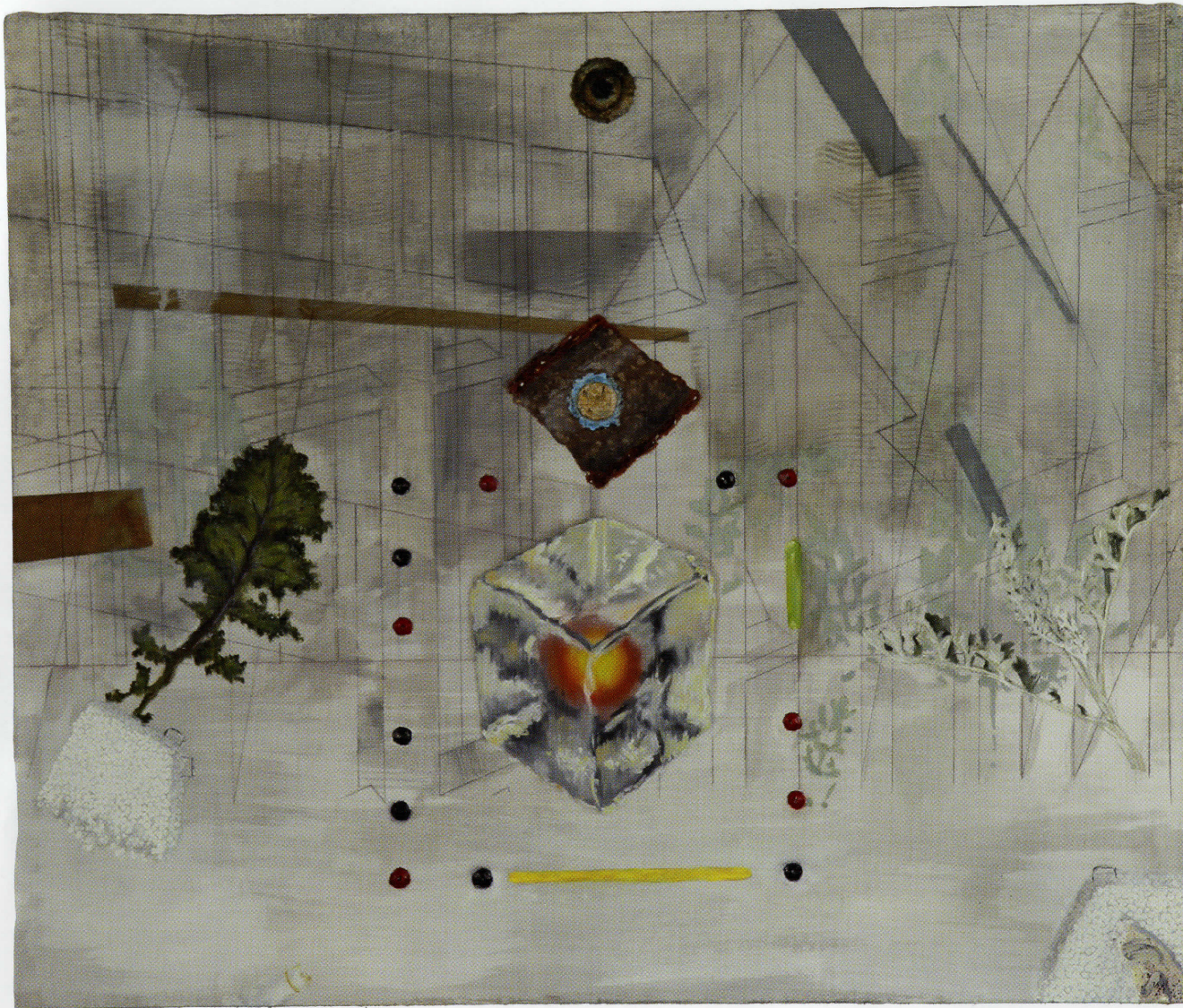
Coffea arabica. /əˈræbɪkə/

[indigenous to the mountains of Ethiopia; first species of coffee to be cultivated]

each morning
with a flutter of heart and wing
a shared production—consumption

Until
wings and anther sit heavy
unmoving with a violation
a chemical reaction
spreading a depletion
of hives
hearts
and bottoms of coffee cups

Poetry by Caroline Barr



"For Ramsey" by Catherine Root
Oil on Canvas



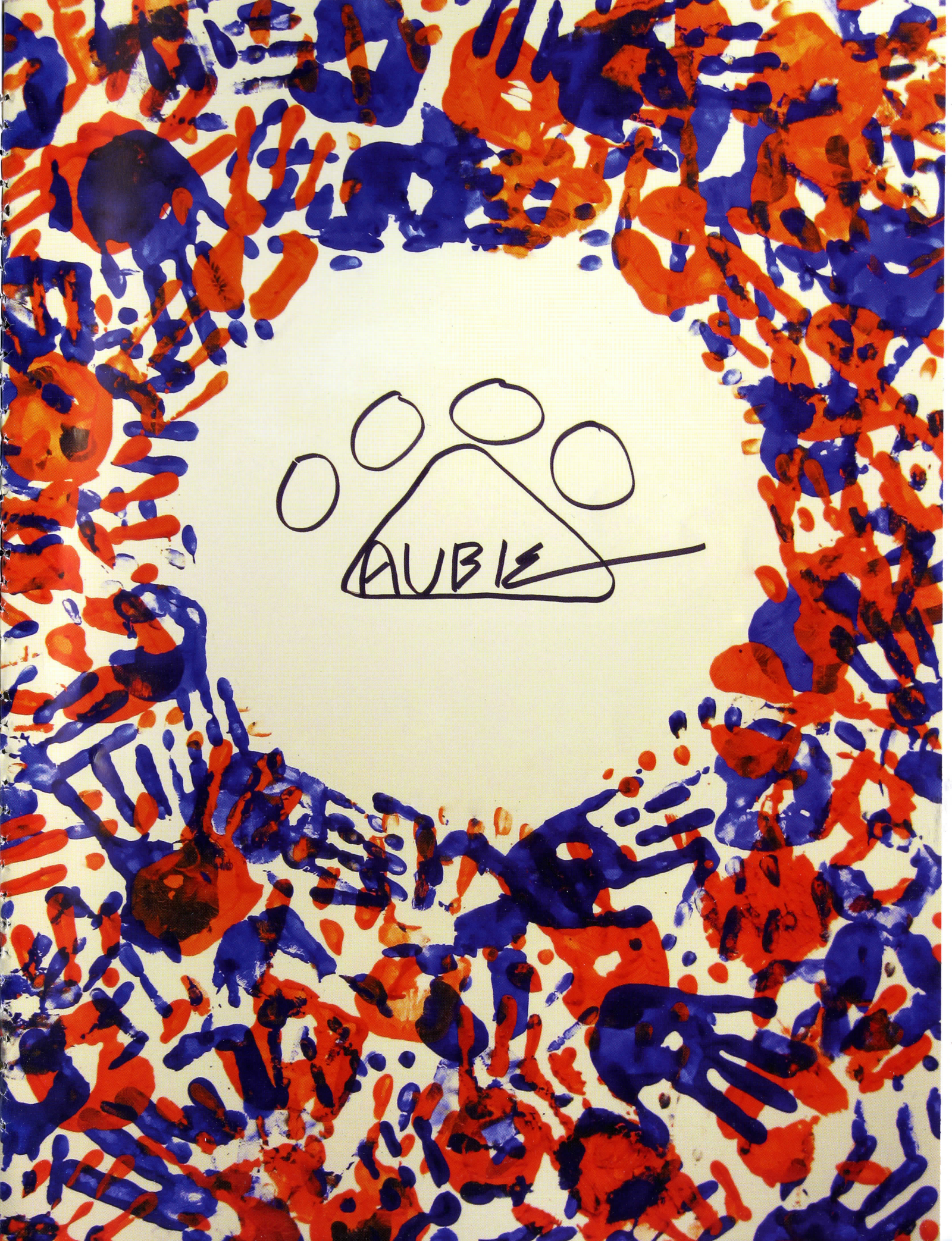
"The Introvert" by Lydia Sweeney
Oil on canvas



"A Time to Reflect" by Noori Mallaji
iPhone 5



"A Wealth of Beads" by Kate McCollum
Canon 5D Mark 3



AUBIE

